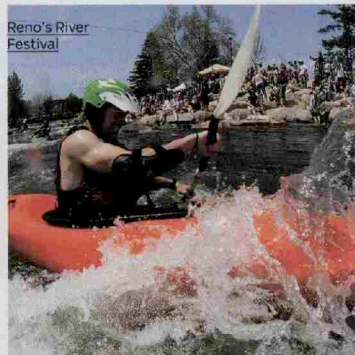
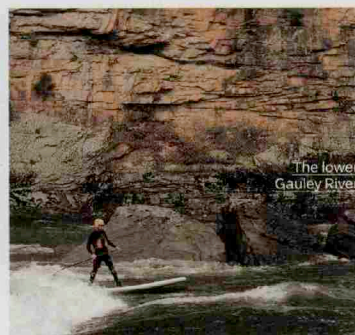




## BEST TOWNS 2010



Reno's River Festival



The lower Gauley River

kitsch at its worst. But it shouldn't, at least not entirely. In the past 20 years, public and private investors have sunk hundreds of millions into downtown, building a pedestrian district around the new \$50 million baseball stadium and revamping the neglected Truckee River with parks and a performing-arts center. Firms ranging from outdoorsy (Patagonia and Sportif) to techy (Microsoft and AT&T) have all set up big branches in Reno, giving its increasingly young and educated populace reason to stay—especially with housing prices down a whopping 52 percent since 2006.

**THE PADDLING:** With 11 pool drops, year-round flow, and a prime location (right downtown, surrounded by green space and an amphitheater), Reno has one of the country's best whitewater parks. Not to be outdone, last year the neighboring community of Sparks, just ten minutes down the road, unveiled its own, even more beginner-friendly park. But the real reason so many pro kayakers call Reno home is its proximity to some of the sweetest western white-



Vermont's Mad River

water—from Class V hair-boating on South Silver Creek to rafting and canoeing on stretches of the Truckee.

**THE NEIGHBORHOOD:** Just south of downtown, and only a few blocks from the whitewater park, Cal Ave has renovated century-old Victorians, locally owned coffee shops, and most of Reno's hipsters.

—KYLE DICKMAN

### RUNNER-UP

#### > Fayetteville, West Virginia

A lot of young people move to Fayetteville (pop. 2,677) to become raft guides on the renowned New and Gauley rivers. Then they get older and decide to do something that supports a mortgage. But they don't leave. A dozen or so other lesser-known (but kick-ass) rivers are part of the reason. So is the quick access to best-in-the-South rock climbing, mountain biking, and hiking. —S.S.

### BEST FOR SKIING (EAST)

#### > Waitsfield, Vermont

POPULATION 1,700

MEDIAN HOME PRICE \$349,300

**HOMETOWN HERO** Extreme-skiing pioneer John Egan, the godfather of Mad River Valley skiing and now the chief recreation officer at Sugarbush

**THE LIVING:** Waitsfield is a classic ski town harking back to the pre-timeshare era. The ski resorts and upscale condos are all up the road, allowing the tiny town to remain an authentic, year-round family-focused community. That's why nonprofits 1% for the Planet, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, and Center for Whole Communities make it their home.

It's also the land of artisanal cheeses and maple, with as many cows as people. Locals tap their own trees, wear jeans and wool plaid for formal occasions, and support local food (like American Flatbread and Kingsbury Farm) and businesses (like Small Dog Electronics, one of the largest Apple resellers in the country).

**THE SKIING:** Two of the East's finest mountains are within ten minutes—both with zero crowds midweek. Depending on your mood, you can charge the glades and bumps of barely groomed Mad River Glen, an old-school "skier's mountain" (read no snowboarders allowed) and the only skier-owned co-op in the country, or rip groomers, snowboard, or cat-ski at Sugarbush. Cross-training? Kick and glide the 300-mile Catamount Trail, ski groomed track at Blueberry Lake nordic center, or hit the Skatium open-air ice-skating rink.

**THE NEIGHBORHOOD:** If you can't find a starter home in view of the ski hills, another option is neighboring Moretown, which is slightly farther from the lifts but only a 15-minute commute from Montpelier, the state capital. —BERNE BROUDY

### RUNNER-UP

#### > Jackson, New Hampshire

With 91 miles of cross-country trails in the surrounding Mount Washington Valley, including dozens right in town, this tiny hamlet (pop. 900) is as close to nordy heaven as you can get. The downhill ain't bad, either: Local resorts like Wildcat Mountain and Attitash have a combined 535 acres of skiable terrain. And Mount Washington's

# Vermont Business & Industry EXPO Draws Record Crowd

This year's Vermont Business & Industry EXPO, organized by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, was a huge success. Exhibitor booths were completely sold out and attendance was at a record high. The event, which was held in May at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in Burlington, featured two days of special events, seminars, and networking opportunities. EXPO drew more than 3,000 business professionals from around the Northeast to northern New England's largest business-to-business trade show where over the two-day period, more than 200 exhibitors showcased their products and services.

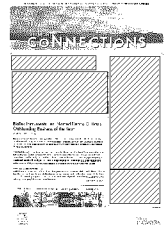
Celebrating its 26th year, EXPO featured several Vermont Chamber member businesses and entrepreneurs, highlighting the dedication seen in the thousands of people employed by this year's exhibitors who are a testament to the enthusiasm present in Vermont's business community.

During the opening ceremonies, BioTek Instruments, Inc., of Winooski was presented with the highly respected Deane C. Davis Outstanding Business of the Year Award. This award is presented annually at EXPO by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce and *Vermont Business Magazine*.

Vermont's candidates for governor also took questions from business leaders during the "Meet the Candidates" Luncheon. This event drew more than 100 people who showed up to hear what the candidates had to say about Vermont's business climate, job creation, taxes, energy, the economy, and health care. Candidates in attendance included: Republican candidate Brian Dubie, Democratic candidates Susan Bartlett, Deborah Markowitz, Doug Racine, Matt Dunne, Peter Shumlin, and Independent candidate Dennis Steele.

And, six young, innovative students from around the state were recognized for their well crafted business ideas in the VT REAL Entrepreneurship Business Plan Competition. This event concluded a semester-long program that challenges Vermont's high school students to develop successful business plans. The top winners received scholarships from Comcast totaling \$2,250.

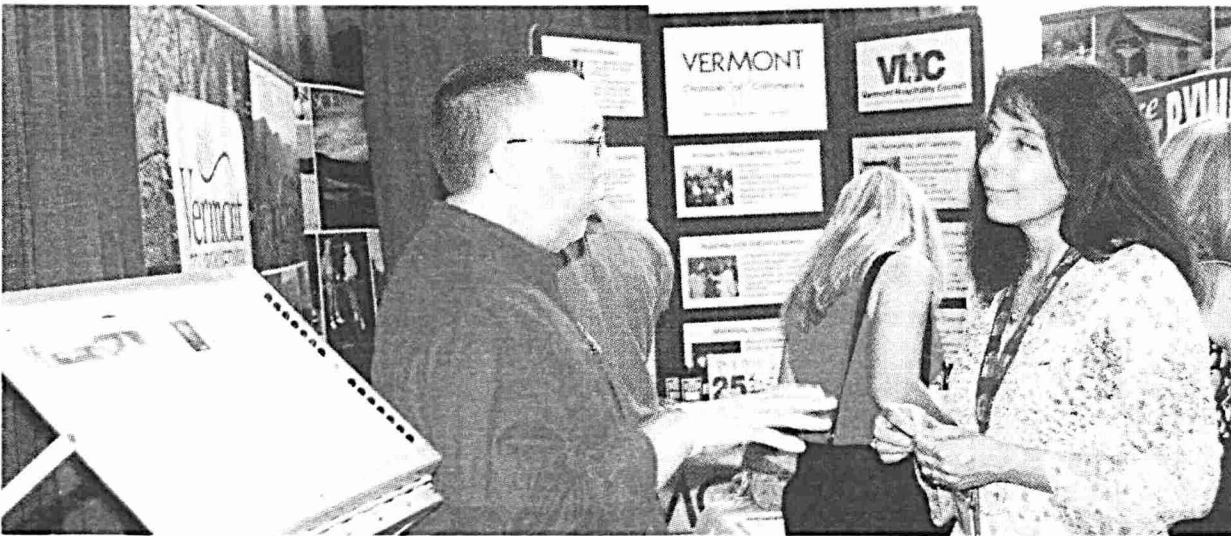
Other highlights included the Senator Leahy Business Breakfast where IBM's Global Business Services' Global Energy and Utilities Industry Leader Michael Valocchi discussed Smart Grid technology and how a \$69 million



federal grant will connect Vermont's electricity generators, transmitters, and consumers. Valocchi talked about how Smart Grid technology will impact businesses and their future energy choices.

And of course, EXPO wouldn't be the same without the Best Booth Awards. This year's awards went to: **Best in Show:** Safeguard of Vermont and New Hampshire, **Best Technology:** Small Dog Electronics, **Best Giveaway:** Myers Waste and Recycle, **Best Staff:** Comcast, and **Best First-Time Exhibitor:** Green Mountain Suites. (See photos page 8)

Now that another very successful Vermont Business & Industry EXPO has come and gone, in just a few short months, planning for EXPO 2011 will begin!



# BioTek Instruments, Inc. Named Deane C. Davis Outstanding Business of the Year

By Antonia Opitz, Director of Events

This year's Deane C. Davis Outstanding Business of the Year Award was presented to BioTek Instruments, Inc. of Winooski during the 26th Annual Vermont Business & Industry EXPO in May. Governor Jim Douglas handed out the award during the opening ceremony of the two-day trade show, organized by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce.

In an effort to recognize and honor Vermont's best companies, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce and *Vermont Business Magazine* created the Deane C. Davis Outstanding Business of the Year Award in 1990. Named for the former Governor of Vermont, this annual award honors a Vermont business that shows an outstanding history of sustained growth while displaying an acute awareness of what makes Vermont unique. Commitment to the environment and dedication to employee relations are key components to receiving this award as well.

## ABOUT BIOTEK INSTRUMENTS, INC.

BioTek Instruments, Inc. is a privately held and family-run business that was founded in 1968. The organization develops instruments used to facilitate the drug recovery process and to aid in the advancement of life science research. This evolving company is committed to continued financial growth, the welfare of its employees, and reducing the company's impact on the environment.

*Continued on page 7*

President and CEO Briar Alpert regards the interests of his employees as a top principle for the mission of the company. Aside from the Winooski location, BioTek maintains offices in Germany, France, Switzerland, the UK, Singapore, China, and India. All locations combined employ nearly 300 people, 259 of whom are located in Vermont. Since 2005, a 52 percent increase in its workforce encouraged BioTek to build a cutting-edge laboratory, adding 8,000 square feet to the Winooski property. With growing workforce numbers, the employee record reports an impressive retention rate with the average tenure of a BioTek employee exceeding 10 years and 18 percent averaging more than 20 years.

BioTek management offers an open-door policy for the staff, encouraging thoughts on policy adjustments to decrease costs or increase employee satisfaction. Annual reviews are holistically approached, based on the individual in the present, past, and with a focus on the future. BioTek also promotes continued education by offering 100 percent tuition reimbursement and a "Bonus Pool" that pays a uniform amount to each person, since every employee is considered an equal contributor to the company.

**BioTek's commitment to employees is apparent and so**



is their dedication to the community. The organization encourages all staff to participate in community programs in order to strengthen the bond with the local community. The staff at BioTek is incentivized to support charities either financially or by donating their own time. Employees can deduct donations directly from their paychecks to be paid to the charity of their choice and BioTek will randomly draw a donator's name to win an additional forty hours of paid vacation time. Volunteering up to eight hours per year will gain them paid time off as well.

Listed in the top five principals of BioTek's mission statement is a pledge to reduce the company's overall impact on the environment. In 2008, BioTek created a team of employees dedicated to continually promoting employee involvement in cleaning up the company's procedures. The "Green Team" coordinates with Efficiency Vermont and Chittenden Solid Waste District to ensure the preservation of Vermont's natural environment. Since the team was established, BioTek expanded their original recycling program, upgraded their buildings to meet strict environmental codes, created a composting policy, and switched to recycled, compostable materials. Employees are also encouraged to carpool to work or receive financial reimbursement for using a bicycle.

BioTek Instruments not only stands out for its efforts to promote the wellbeing of the employees but also for its commitment to reducing its overall environmental impact. The company has also shown great strides in sales and growth over the past five years. Since 2005, BioTek's sales have increased 78 percent, a striking number given the recent economy.

Impressive sales growth, environmental responsibility and commitment to employees and local community make BioTek a leader in its industry.

Many Vermont companies exemplified the standards by which the Deane C. Davis Outstanding Vermont Business Award nominees were judged this year, but only three could be distinguished as finalists for this 20-year-old award. The three finalists for this year's award were BioTek Instruments, Inc. of Winooski, The Foley Family of Companies of Rutland,

and Small Dog Electronics of Waitsfield.

All three businesses showed great merit as finalists for the Deane C. Davis Award. Like Davis himself—former governor, president of National Life of Vermont, environmentalist, and founder of the Vermont Chamber of Commerce—each finalist reflects Vermont's diverse nature and, at the same time, radiates a savvy business sense.